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THE TROUBLE AND CURE OF A Wounded Conscience

Set out in a

SERMON

Preached in St *Mary's* Church at *Gates-head*, in the County Palatine of *Durham.*

Upon *Isaiah* 57. Verse 21.
There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

By *RICHARD WERGE*, A.M.
Rector of that Church.

LONDON: Printed for *R. Clavil*, at the *Peacock* in St. *Paul's* Church-yard. 1685.

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WE read that *Melchisedeck*, who was King of *Salem*, King of Peace, was also King of Righteousness. And the *Psalmist* tells us, that *Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other*, Psal. 85. 10. And the Prophet *Isaiah* 32. 17, 18. tells us, *That the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness:* the Apostle joyns Peace and Holiness together, *Heb.* 12. 14. Thus we see that Peace and Righteousness, and Peace and Holiness, are like *Hippocrates* his *Gemelli*, and like *Rebekah's* Twins, that went together; they are a most lovely pair, which we meet in Scripture hand in hand together, like two Turtle-doves that feed together and sleep together; and indeed these things, which (in Scripture) God hath so joyned together, men must not put asunder; but are to be looked upon as the Root and Branch, and the Fountain and Stream which always go together; and as the two Tables of the Law, which ought not to be severed.

Men must not think to sit quietly under their own Vines and Figg-trees, if they disquiet God by their Sins; nor must they think to have inward-peace, so long as they work Abominations. Have you seen the Shadow following the Substance? As naturally doth Anxiety and Trouble follow Sin. The rouling of the Seas and the blowing of the Winds is not more natural, than for Sin to be accompanied with trouble and horrour, Sin being the true mortal-cause thereof. In Heaven there is no fear nor trouble, because in Heaven there is no Sin. Our first Parents conversed with God in Paradise very confidently; they never grew timerous till they grew sinful; so soon as *Adam* Sinned, he presently became acquainted with horrour.

Zophar speaking of a wicked man, *Job* 20. 20, 22, 24. saith thus: *Surely he shall not feel quietness; the bow of steel shall strike him thorough, terrours are upon him:* A wicked man being without God, and without Christ, is like *Noah's* Dove without the Ark, in a restless condition. *Tribulation and anguish to every soul that sinneth*, Rom. 2. 9. What peace, so long as thy Mother *Jesabels* Whoredoms and Witchcrafts are many in number? *From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?* James 4. 1. What the *Comœdian* said of a person, may be truely said of Sin, *Davus hic perturbat omnia.* It is Sin that maketh all our disturbances. Ho-

Holineſs freeth men from torment, either by preventing the cauſe of it, or directing to the cure: It removes the chief grounds of trouble and diſquiet, and it miniſters all the true cauſes of Peace and Tranquility of mind. * [illegible] Purity poſſeſſeth men with an aſſurance of the beſt things, but Sin makes the condition of men to be full of trouble and unquietneſs: Sin hath been the occaſion of Wars between Kingdoms and Nations, ſo that thouſands have been ſlain, Cities, Towns, and Kingdoms have been made heaps of Rubbiſh and diſſolate Wilderneſſes, full of Briers and Thorns, and habitations for wild Beaſts, Dragons, and Owls, and other doleful Creatures. Sin hath been an occaſion of much unquietneſs in the Spirits of men: there are many inſtances and examples of this in Scripture, and in Hiſtory; I will give you as it were an handful out of a full Sack.

* Ἡ καθαρὸς,

Cain when he had ſlain his Brother *Abel*, was a Fugitive and a Vagabond, affraid that whoſoever ſhould meet him ſhould ſlay him; crying out, *That his puniſhment was greater than he could bear*, Gen. 4. *Belſhazzar's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, ſo that the joynts of his loyns were looſed, and his knees ſmote one againſt another*, Dan. 5. In the New Teſtament, we find *Herod* perplexed after the murdering of *John*, *Luke* 9. we find *Judas* after his betraying Chriſt, ſo fill'd with diſpair, that

he

he hang'd himself, *Matth.* 27. 4, 5. We find the unworthy guest speechless; and *Felix* trembling when *Paul* reasoned of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come, *Acts* 24. 25. We find (in History) *Cajaphas* the High Priest, who gathered the Councel against Christ, and suborn'd false Witnesses against him, was so perplexed that he killed himself. *Pontius Pilate*, who condemned our Saviour, soon after fell into disgrace with the *Roman* Emperour *Caligula*, and was sent for by him to *Rome*, to answer to some Accusations made against him; but by the way he fell into such terrours of Conscience, as that he hang'd himself. *Nero* that monster of mankind, who most unnaturally murdered his Mother *Agripina*, and his Wives, and his Tutours *Seneca* and *Lucan*, and fired the City of *Rome*; and then charg'd it upon the Christians (that so they might be exposed to the fury of the people) had at length such an Hell in his Conscience, as that he could rest neither day nor night. *Otho* that murdered *Galba*, *Cajus Marius* that bloody Tyrant in *Rome*, *Tiberius* the Emperour, *Pausanias* the *Lacedæmonian* King, And *Richard* the Third (here in *England*;) these were all of them troubled with fearful Dreams, and all of them felt the terrours and the lashes of Conscience so violent, that they could take no rest.

And now, *Would you know the occasions of this? Why, they are four.*

First,

First, *The Law.*
Secondly, *Sin.*
Thirdly, *Satan.*
And Fourthly, *Conscience.*

First, *The Law is an occasion of this:* The promulgation of the Law upon *Mount Sinai*, was in a dreadful manner, with signs of Terrour and the effects of Terrour; the Mount on which it was given burnt with fire, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness, *Duet.* 4. a tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; so terrible was the sight and voice, that *Moses* himself (a man eminent in Grace) did exceedingly fear and quake. From the time of *Adam* unto *Moses*, the Law of Nature was almost obliterated; and when God set out the lively Image, the draught and abstract of it by *Moses*; it was in that dreadful manner, that it flashed wrath upon the fallen Creature, and possessed those that heard it with a Spirit of fear, terrour, and trembling; the Law given upon *Mount Sinai*, gendered unto Bondage, *Gal.* 4. 24. it was a ministration of death and condemnation, it was a cuting and a killing letter, 2 *Cor.* 3. 6, 7, 9. I have slain them by the mouths of my Prophets: they that escaped the sword of *Hazael* and *Jehu*, were to be slain by the sword of *Elisha*, 1 *Kin.* 19. 17. The word of God is compared to a two edged Sword; the Gospel hath one Edge to slay Sin in

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the Believer; and the Law hath another Edge to ſlay the Impenitent Sinner. *I have hewed them by the prophets*, Hoſ. 6. 5. It is like that Sword, *Gen.* 3. 24. that turned every way to keep *Adam* out of *Paradiſe*, ſo doth the Law in the Conſcience of a Sinner, forbidding him (during his Agony) to enter into the Paradiſe of comfortable thoughts.

The Law purely conſidered, without any reſpect had to the Covenant of Grace, was given to diſcover Sin, to proclaim Wrath and Curſes to the Sinner. The Law ſo conſidered, perſwades a Sinner that all thoſe Armies of Plagues, and Curſes, and Sorrows, and Sufferings denounced therein, ſhall with an unreſiſtable violence take hold on him, and purſue him with that fury as that he ſhall never be able to abide nor avoid it. The Law (alſo) being given upon *Mount Sinai* in *Arabia*, the *Iſhmaelites* Land (who deſcended from *Hagar*) out of the bounds of the Land of Promiſe (conſidered purely and abſtractively from the Covenant of Grace, and not as given in ſubordination and ſubſervencie to the Covenant of Grace) is to diſcover Sin, and the wrath of God againſt Sin; and this works terrour in the Sinner.

Secondly, *Sin is an occaſion of this*: Guilt is an adjunct of Sin. *All the world is guilty before God*, Rom. 3. 19. ὑπόδικος, liable to condemnation. Now this guilt works horrour; and upon this horrour ſome-

ſometimes follows deſparation. *Peracto ſcelere magnitudo ejus conſpicitur*, as *Tacitus* ſaid of *Nero*. When a man hath committed a ſin, then he ſeeth the greatneſs of it; that thereby the Law of God is violated; that thereby the Juſtice of God is offended; and then he is ready to look upon himſelf as being excluded from thoſe Goſpel-priviledges, Adoption, Acceptation, Pardon, Peace, Spiritual Life, Liberty, Grace, and Glory in Jeſus Chriſt; then he looks upon himſelf as a Debtor to God, bound over to the penalty of his Law which he hath broken; and then he is ready to accuſe and condemn himſelf, and is over-whelm'd with deſperation, ready to deſtroy himſelf.

Our Bleſſed Saviour being a Sinner (onely by imputation) met with conflicts and deſertions, and was in an Agony. Sin deprives men of God's favour, which is the ſpring of comfort: it keeps men from an intereſt in Chriſt, who is the Conſolation of *Iſrael*. Sin blinds the minde, it hardens the heart, it deads the affections, it alienates men from God, it works deluſions, deſperate thoughts, horrour of heart, and confuſion of ſpirit: Sin follows men like an Avenger of Blood; Sin is a bitter-ſweet, like *Eſaus* Meſs, like the *Iſraelites* Quails, like *Adonjah*'s Dainties; when the Meal is ended, then comes the Reckoning. When Sin is unmaskt then that which before appeared ſweet and beautiful,

will appear bitter and ugly; that which before was delightful, will then appear dreadful. Oh, the ſhame, the pain, the gall, the bitterneſs, the horrour and hell that a true ſight of Sin will raiſe in the Soul! When the Dreſs is taken off, it will appear more vile, and filthy, and terrible than Hell it ſelf. This made *Anſelme* ſay, *That if he ſhould ſee the ſhame of Sin on the one hand, and the pains of Hell on the other, and muſt of neceſſity chooſe one, he would rather be thruſt into Hell without Sin, than go into Heaven with Sin.*

Thirdly, *Satan is an occaſion of trouble in wicked men:* Thoſe Serpents that ſtung the *Iſraelites*, were called fiery Serpents; poſſibly in regard of their colour, or rather in regard of their effect. Serpents biting the *Iſraelites* did occaſion a burning in their fleſh, which made a fiery heat in thoſe whom they ſtung; ſo the old Serpent (the Devil) doth ſet the Souls of wicked men on fire, ſo that they think themſelves to be burning already, and expect to burn for ever (hereafter) in Hell.

The Devil is called ἀντίδικος, an Adverſary; he is (alſo) called *a roaring Lion*, Pet. 1. 5, 8. as an Adverſary he will ſpight men, and as a roaring Lion he will affright men. The Devil is called κατήγορος, *an Accuſer*, Rev. 12. 10. the Devil doth not onely accuſe God to man, as *Gen.* 3. 5. and man to God, *Job* 1. 9, 10. but man to himſelf. Satan entred into

to *Judas*, *Luke* 22. 3. to accuſe and torment him with thoughts of his Blood-guiltineſs: he is alſo called [illegible] from a compounded Verb that ſignifies to ſtrike through. We read of the Fiery-darts of the Devil; theſe Darts he ſhoots through the Spirits of wicked men, and doth infect, poiſon, and burn: He is called the Envious man, Satan from his craftineſs, *Belial* for his miſchievous wickedneſs, *Cor.* 2. 6, 15. *Abaddon* and *Appollyon*, *Rev.* 9. 11. as being a deſtroyer, *Belzebub* (which ſignifies a Prince of flies) becauſe he doth vex and fret a Wounded Conſcience, (even) as flies do vex and fret a gaul'd Creature. * διαβολος,

Fourthly, *Conſcience is an occaſion of this*: The word συνείδησις, which ſignifies Conſcience is a compound, it is derived from οἶδα which ſignifies to ſee or know, and the propoſition σὺν, which ſignifies with, the Latine word, *Conſcientia*, *is*, *quaſi cordis Scientia*: So that the Greek, the Latine, and the Engliſh word Conſcience, (which is derived from the Latine) ſignifies a Knowledge with, that is, with ſome other thing, even as of the Heart. *What man knows the things of a man, ſave the ſpirit of man, which is in him?* 1 Cor. 2. 11. *Thou knoweſt all the wickedneſs which thine heart is privy to, which thou didſt to David my father*: *Solomon*, there appeals to the Conſcience of *Shimei*, 1 Kings 2. 44. And indeed Conſcience is the private Regiſter of

mens Actions, it is a faithful Monitor within their breasts, it is the Eye of the Soul, to over-see the whole Occasions and Actions of the Heart and Life, it is the Tongue of wicked mens Souls, that makes report of the aberrations of their ways: *The office of conscience is to bear witness*, Rom. 2. 15. and indeed it is a faithful witness that will not lie, *Prov.* 14. 5.

Now the witness of Conscience is according to the qualities of men; it excuseth good men, *Acts* 23. 1. and thereupon followeth Peace, *Rom.* 5. 1. It convinceth and accuseth wicked men, *John* 8. 9. it condemns them also, *Titus* 3. 11. 1 St. *John* 3. 20. aie, and it torments them, by occasioning shame and anxiety of spirit, *Levit.* 26. 26. *Prov.* 28. 1. *Rom.* 6. 21. Grief, Trembling, and Desparation, these are usually the Adjuncts and Concomitants of a perplexed Conscience.

There are three things considerable in Mans Conscience.

First, *The Matter.*
Secondly, *The Act.*
Thirdly, *The Consequence.*

The Matter of Mans Conscience before the Fall, was a Conformity in the whole Man, to the whole will of God.

The Act of Mans Conscience then, was to give a true testimony thereof.

And the Consequence (upon Mans continuance in

in that Eſtate) would have been Peace and Quietneſs.

Such a good Conſcience would have remain'd in man if he had continued in his entire Eſtate: But by mans Fall, his good Conſcience was quite loſt, and now is become (altogether) Evil. *Every imagination of mans heart, is onely evil continually*, Gen. 6. 5. And now mans evil Conſcience ſhoweth itſelf to be ſo, two ways.

Firſt, *In the defect of Trouble.*

Secondly, *In the exceſs of Trouble.*

Firſt, In the defect of Trouble: When Sinners have upon them a Stoical Apathy, a Spirit of ſlumber upon them, as that they have no remorſe at all in their Hearts; they have no trouble for Sins paſt, but have a ſetled purpoſe and reſolution to continue in Sin. Such a Conſcience is called a ſeared Conſcience, 1 *Tim.* 4. 2. ſuch a Conſcience had they of whom the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Epheſ.* 4. 19. that were paſt feeling, and gave themſelves over to laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs; Such a Conſcience had *Pharaoh*, ſuch a Conſcience had *Ahab*, that ſold himſelf to work wickedneſs. Such as theſe have a Brow of Braſs, they know no ſhame, *Zep.* 3. 5.

Secondly, An evil Conſcience ſhoweth itſelf to be ſo, in the exceſs of Trouble: When wicked men wanting Prayer, and Repentance, and Faith, and Hope,

Hope, and the Pardon of Sin, and the Inhabitation of the Spirit, and the comfort of the Scriptures (which ſhould be ſupports to them) are troubled above meaſure, for that their Life is a burden to them; In the Morning they wiſh that it were Night; in the Night they wiſh it were Morning. They are like the rageing Sea, that continually caſts up Mire and Foam: this was the condition of *Cain*, *Judas*, and *Spira*.

Object. Why, but you will ſay, Why ſhould wicked men be thus diſcriminated and diſtinguiſhed from others, as being reſtleſs and unquiet? Are not the beſt of men by the voice of Gods Word, Law, and Goſpel; and by the voice of Judgments, and by the Acts of Conſcience, informing, warning, correcting, and judicial in a perplexed Eſtate alſo? *Heman* complains of troubles and terrours, *Pſal.* 88. he was ſenſible of Gods fierce wrath, of an overwhelming wrath, a cutting, killing, and ſurrounding wrath, *v.* 3, 6, 7, 15, 16. Yet *Heman* was one of the wiſeſt men, next after *Solomon*, 1 *Kings* 4. 31. The condition of *Job* was like that of *Heman*; he thought that God wrote bitter things againſt him, *Job* 13. 24, 26. He was ſcared with Dreams, and terrified with Viſions, ſo that his Soul choſe ſtrangling and death, rather than life, *Job* 7. 14, 15, 20. He thought himſelf to be ſet up as a mark to ſhoot at; he was a burden to himſelf; he went mourning

ing without the Sun, *Job* 30. 28. Yet *Job* was a great and good man: As for his greatneſs, he was ſuppoſed to be the King of the *Edomites*; and as for his goodneſs, he was one that feared God and eſchewed evil, *Job* 1. *David* complains *Pſal.* 38. 6. *I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long. I am feeble and ſore broken; I have roared for the (very) diſquietneſs of my heart.* Yet *David* was a man famous in his Generation, for Piety and Holineſs; he was a man *after Gods own heart*, 1 Sam. 13. 14. He is called *the man of God*, Nehemiah 12. 36. Amiable and Delectable before God and Man: So his name (*David*) ſignifieth.

Now for Anſwer to this: We muſt note that the Troubles of *Job*, *Heman*, and *David*, were Troubles not in the Conſcience (onely) but alſo in the Affections; and this occaſioned a Godly ſorrow, as being an effect of Grace. And they had the Uſe and Exerciſe of Prayer, and Faith in the midſt of their Diſtreſſes, *Job* 42. 4. *Pſal.* 88. 1, 2. *Pſal.* 19. 12. *Pſal.* 51. 9. 1 *Sam.* 24. 5. 2 *Sam.* 24. 10. So that the Iſſue of all their Troubles was glorious. After an *Eſeck*, and a *Sitnah*, there was a *Rehaboth*, Gen. 26. 20, 21, 22. after the Wind, Earthquake, and Fire, there came a ſtill Voice, 1 *Kings* 10. 11, 12. after an Hectick, Health; after an Eclipſe, clear Light, ---- *Sequitur*

poſt

poſt nubila Phœbus. After Showers, Sun-ſhine; after a Wandering in the Wilderneſs, a *Canaans* Reſt. They had ſecret Supports in their greateſt Extremities, and (at the laſt) had an anſwer of Peace and Comfort: But the Troubles of *Cain* and *Judas*, were no whit the Troubles of Affections, but of Conſcience onely; and where there is a trouble of Conſcience onely, it is to be looked upon (onely) as a judicial Act of God, upon the Conſcience, and it is not to be looked upon as an Effect of Grace, but as a part of the Wages of Sin.

The Subject of Conſcience is the Soul.
The Object of Conſcience is Sin.

Now where the Conſcience onely is awakened and enlightened by a common illumination, (ſo as to ſee Sin) it is then in a condition to accuſe, and condemn, and vex the Sinner. That trouble in the Conſcience, which is onely a judicial Act, (conſiſting in Senſe and Accuſation) God in Judgment brings upon the Tranſgreſſour. When Inſtruction, Direction, Councels, Cautions, Threatnings, and Checks do not keep men from ſinning; then God doth (after Sin) awaken the Conſcience, to accuſe for Sinning; and then the Soul is filled with bitterneſs; and then the terrours of Hell do ſhake and confound the Soul. Men ſo tormented, long after Death, and if it come not, they ſearch after it more than treaſures, and rejoyce when they can find the

Grave.

Grave. Conſcience works upon Sin, and Sin frets and vexeth the Soul; ſo that Conſcience becomes as a Worm that never dieth, *Iſai.* 66. 24. Heavineſs in the heart of man maketh it ſtoop, *Prov.* 12. 15. By the ſorrow of the heart the Spirit is broken, *Prov.* 15. 13. Such an one is as one bruiſed between the Wall and the Door. *Nulla gravior pœna pœnâ conſcientiæ*, ſaid *Iſiodorus*: There is no puniſhment more grievous than the puniſhment of a guilty Conſcience. The Rack and Wheel are, and ---- *Uri, virgis, ferroque, necari.* Burning and Scourging, and all thoſe bloudy cruelties invented by the Heathen Perſecutors, are ſhort of this: *A wounded ſpirit who can bear?* Prov. 18. 14. *Juvenal* deſcribes the ſad eſtate of ſuch men thus:

---------- *Cur tamen hos tu*
Evaſiſſe putes, quos diri conſcia facti
Mens habet attonitos, & ſurdo verbere cædit,
Occulto quatiente animo tortore flagellum?

They that are guilty of foul Facts, are affrighted in their Conſcience; they are ſcourged and beaten with unknown blows. Their Conſcience (like an Executioner) whips, bites, and torments them: an evil Conſcience ſits as a Judge, and it is call'd in as a Witneſs; nay more, an evil Conſcience is, *Judex, Teſtis, Carcer, Tortor, Judicat, Accuſat, Damnat.* An evil Conſcience is a Judge, a Witneſs, a Priſon, an Executioner; it keeps Seſſions within it

ſelf; it accuſeth, judgeth, and condemneth. An evil Conſcience is a plague which you can neither *fugere*, nor *fugare*; it is an Evil which a Sinner can neither flee, nor fly from.

Cain put himſelf upon the building of a City, to remove the troubles of his mind; but that would not do it, *Gen.* 4. 17. *Belſhazzar* thought by his Cups, to remove the trouble of his Spirit; but that would not remove it, *Dan.* 5. 2. Such men in the midſt of their greateſt delights, Singing, Dancing, and Dalliance, are tortured in their Souls. As *Lemnius* ſpeaks, *Nocte dieque ſuum geſtant in pectore teſtem:* Night and day they carry their Witneſs and Accuſer within their breaſts. So that outward pleaſures and delights cannot more cure their Wounded Conſcience, than a Crown of Gold can cure the Head-ach, or a Velvet Slipper cure the Gout. A perplexed man in the midſt of all outward pleaſures, riches, and honours, is like a Book of Tragedies, fairly bound up without, but black within; the Leaves Gold, and the Lines Blood: no Friends nor Phyſick, no Gold nor Silver, nor Favour of Princes, no Pleaſures of the World can give comfort in ſuch a caſe; neither Crowns nor Kingdoms can give deliverance in ſuch a caſe. There is no Bodily Sickneſs but Nature (by the means of Phyſick) hath provided a Remedy; no Sore but Chirurgery hath provided a Salve for it. There is

no

no outward miſery but there may be ſome means to relieve it; Friendſhip helps Poverty, Hope of Liberty eaſeth Impriſonment, Favour revokes Baniſhment, Time wears away Reproach; but none of all theſe things can relieve or comfort a diſtreſſed Soul.

Pierius makes a continually hot baking Oven the Hierogliphick of a gauled Conſcience. And the *Egyptians* made a Mill an Hierogliphick of the ſame; both for continuance and torture. A man ſo perplexed is [illegible], a ſelf-Tormentor: ſuch an ones Conſcience (like *Titius* his *Vulture*) doth continually knaw him. That which was feigned of *Prometheus* (as being bound to a Pillar upon the Mountain *Caucaſus*, and an Eagle eating his Liver every day, and that which was eaten in the day, grew up in the night, (that there might be no decay of his torment) is true in this caſe; it is a Worm that never dieth. Such an ones Houſe may be compared to *Trophonius* his Den, where were nothing but doleful Ecchoes and ſad Complaints. A perplexed wicked man may take to him *Paſhurs* terrible Name mentioned in *Jerem.* 20. 3. *Magormiſſabib*, that is, fear round about: ſuch an one is a terrour to himſelf, and to all that are about him. What ſhall I ſay more? A troubled Conſcience is an Epitomy of Hell, an Extract, a Quinteſence, a Compound, a Mixture of all Malladies, Tyrannical

Tortures, Plagues, and Perplexities; Fear, Sorrow, Fury, Grief, Pain, Terrour, Anger, all these things come short of it. Were I to write a full Description of a Troubled Conscience, (though I had *Melpomene* for my Muse, and had a Pen of Iron droping Cruelty, and had Ink, and writing as Bloud) yet I could not sufficiently delineate it: And therefore in this case I shall do like *Timanthes*, who when he was to draw out the Picture of *Agamemnons* Grief, (and was not able to perfect it) covered it over with a Veil; he Pictur'd *Calchas* sad, *Ulysses* mourning, and *Menelaus* more sorrowful than either of them; but as for *Agamemnon*, (whose Daughter *Iphiginia* was to be sacrificed) he conceived his grief and sorrow to be *in summo gradu*, not to be deciphered by Art; and therefore he covered his Face with a Veil, and left every man to his own conceit about it. So in this case, being not able throughly to describe the misery of an Afflicted Conscience; I shall break off abruptly, as to the farther Explication of this point, and shall leave every man to his own imagination about it. I have done with the Tragical part.

And now I am apt to think that some drooping Spirits (groaning under the pressure of Sin, and ready to despond and despair, by reason of some present guilt upon them, for some foul facts committed) are ready to say to me, Must we part thus?

Are

Are there no crumbs of comfort? Shall we hear no word of peace? Will you let your voice be (ſtill) like the hoarſe ſound of a Trumpet in a dead march? Shall your Sermon be like *Draco's* Laws, that begun and ended in death? Is there *no balme in Gilead?* Is there no Phyſician there? Is there no way to be reconciled to God, and to have a peace within our ſelves, and to have our Wounded Spirits healed? Why, yes I ſhall (by and by) come to the Conſolatory part, and ſhall put you into a way to be at peace with God, and to have peace within your ſelves, and to have your Spirits calm'd, and your Conſciences quieted. But before I come to lay down any Rules of direction or means to obtain this; I ſhall lay down Motives to perſwade you hereunto.

Firſt, God hath promiſed it, *The Lord will ſpeak peace to his people*, Pſal. 85. 8. *Peace ſhall be upon Iſrael*, Pſal. 125. *I create the fruit of the lips: peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is nigh*, Iſai. 57. 19. that is, "I will really accompliſh that "which I have promiſed (in giving peace) both to "Jews and Gentiles.

Secondly, Chriſt hath purchaſed our Peace; The chaſtiſement of our Peace was upon him; there was a proclamation of Peace at Chriſt's coming into the World; the great Deſign of Chriſt was to reconcile God to man, and to pacifie mans Conſcience, *Rom.* 5. 25. 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. *Third-*

Thirdly, Others have obtained Peace within themselves; *David*, who for three quarters of a year was in a *Spiritual Lethargie*, (being at length awakened, was much perplexed) yet was at length restored to the joy of Salvation. Mr. *Bilney* (for a whole Year) was in such anguish of Spirit, that he thought all the whole Scriptures were against him, and sounded out his condemnation; but afterward he was indued with such Strength and Faith, that he did not onely confess his Faith in the Gospel, but suffered his Body to be burnt for the Gospels sake. *Luther* about the year 1514. was in such an Agony of Spirit, that he felt nothing but trembling and fearfulness, especally when (at *Rome*) upon his bare Knees he was climbing up certain Steps of *Pilate's Ladder*, (which the *Romanists* feigned to be brought from *Jerusalem*) when he was doing this (in a Superstitious way) as a means to purge his Sins, and quiet his restless and troubled Minde, by the illumination of the Spirit he came to a right understanding of that Scripture, *The just shall live by his faith*; and then he was exceedingly comforted, and his mind was pacified, and he set about the Reformation, and became a wonderful Instrument of God (through whom God hath opened the light of his Word) to the World. Such examples as these (who have found peace with God and within themselves) should encourage us.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Consider the Misery of a Troubled Conscience, *A wounded spirit who can bear?* And a wounded spirit who can declare? As the troubles of the Soul are insupportable, so they are inexpressible. A wicked mans Conscience is the greatest Tyrant and Persecutour to himself; he needs no other fury to follow him; this is both Accuser and Witness, Law and Judge, Executioner and Punishment to himself. A Soul left to the temptations of the Devil, and to its own darkness and unbelief, like *Saul* falls upon its own Sword, and becomes its own Executioner: *The wicked fleeth when none pursueth*: The wicked (in this respect) are like Sheep, of which it is said, that when they run, they are afraid of the sound of their own Feet: Sin doth beget a dejection of Spirit and fearful Terrours. After *Herod* had murdered *John* in the Prison, he was perplext, his mind was much about *John*; for when he heard of the great Miracles that were wrought by Christ, he cryed out, That it was *John Baptist*, risen from the dead, *Mat.* 14. 1. Upon the commission of Sin there follows a Spirit of bondage unto Fear; so that sinners are in a condition as if they were fettered and shut up in Prison. They are full of anguish, vexation, and terrour: they are afraid to come near God, and afraid that God will never come near them in Mercy; they are afraid to die, and afraid of Gods wrath, revealed

from Heaven againſt their Sins; they are afraid of what they have done againſt God, and afraid of what God may do againſt them. *Nicephorus Phocas* the *Greek* Emperour, and *Pauſanius* the *Lacedemonian* King, (having done foul facts) were tired with a continual vexation of Spirit, always afraid of Heavens vengeance. Theſe troubles of perplexed Souls are not Fabulous things, and we have the Word of God for it: *There is no peace to the wicked, ſaith my God*; in the Text. And theſe words are ſeveral times repeated in this Propheſie: And *Verba toties inculcata, vera ſunt, viva ſunt, plana ſunt, ſana ſunt.* Words often repeated are true, and lively, ſound, and plain.

Fifthly, Conſider the happy eſtate of thoſe who are at peace with God, and at peace within themſelves.

Firſt, They are related to God, as to a Father; they are related to a Wiſe, Powerful, and Merciful God; they are aſſured of Gods care over them, and of his providence and goodneſs toward them; they have the light of Gods Countenance ſhining upon them; they are ſenſible of Gods favour, and of his loving kindneſs, which is better than Life itſelf.

Secondly, They have an intereſt in Chriſt, who is the Brightneſs of his Fathers Glory; they are ingrafted into Chriſt, and incorporated into that Myſtical Body, whereof Chriſt is the Head; they have

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an intereſt in the Merits of Chriſt, and in all the Fruits and Effects of his Death and Bloodſhed; and in him they have a Spiritual Title to all the things of the World.

Thirdly, They have a right to all the rich promiſes in Scripture, both of Grace and Glory.

Fourthly, They ſee all their Sins charged upon Chriſt, laid upon his Shoulders, and pardoned as to themſelves: they ſee all their Sins ſo remitted as that they are not affrighted, neither by the magnitude nor multitude of their Sins; beſides all this, they are not afraid of the Faces of men, though rich, honourable, and powerful; they fear not the Sons of *Anak*, nor the *Gammodims* in the Towers; they are not afraid of reproaches nor loſſes, either of Goods, Friends, or Children; they are not afraid of want, either of Food or Raiment, though there ſhould be no Flocks nor Herds in the Fields or Stalls, yet they can rejoyce in the God of their Salvation; they are not afraid of Baniſhment into a Wilderneſs, or into a ſtrange Land; they are not afraid of Impriſonment; they can look upon a Priſon as a Pallace, and upon a Chain as an Ornament, and upon Bondage itſelf as Liberty; they are not afraid of Wars, nor of Famine, nor of Sickneſs, nor Death itſelf: the excellency of this Peace is ſuch, and the benefits and comforts of it are ſo many and great, as they cannot be throughly known; *The peace of God paſſeth all underſtanding.*

Now you will ſay, We are convinced that it is our Duty to ſeek after a Peace of Conſcience within our ſelves, But how ſhall we obtain it? The means are there,

First, *Reſiſt the Devil.*
Secondly, *Keep at a diſtance from Sin.*
Thirdly, *Set about Repentance.*
Fourthly, *Hearken diligently to the Goſpel.*

I. Reſiſt the Devil, Whoſe work it is to tempt to Sin, and then to accuſe for Sin, and then to tempt to Deſparation. When Chriſt reſiſted the Devil *he departed for a ſeaſon*, Luke 4. 14. And do you *reſiſt the devil, and he will flee from you*, James 4. 7.

II. Keep at a diſtance from Sin: *Pliny* 10. *Lib.* 67. *Epiſtle*, writes thus of the Chriſtians of the Primitive Times: *Stato die ante lucem convenire, & ſe Sacramento obſtringere, nè furta, nè latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent*: By break of the day they met together, and bound themſelves by an Oath, againſt the Sins of Adultery, Theft, and Rapine. Let your reſolution be the ſame againſt all Sin, as being that that hath made a variance between God and you, and a diſturbance in your Souls. *If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away; then thou ſhalt be ſtedfaſt, and ſhalt not fear*, Job 11. 14, 15.

III. Set about Repentance: *They who ſow in tears ſhall reap in joy.* Broken hearts ſhall be bound up: The ſpirits of the contrite ſhall be revived:

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The weary and heavy laden ſhall reſt: There is a promiſe of comfort, to penitential mourners, *Mat.* 5. 4. That woman who was a notorious Sinner (when ſhe ſtood at Chriſts feet, weeping and waſhing his feet with tears) was forgiven and comforted. Comfort doth not follow Repentance as a Natural effect: Repentance doth not diſcharge us from the guilt of Sin, as an Act of ours; but as it is a work of Grace, and as a means appointed (by God) for that end.

IV. Hearken diligently to the Goſpel: The Goſpel is called Glad Tidings; *It is a goſpel of peace*, Rom. 10. 15. *A word of Reconciliation*, 2 Cor. 5. 19. Miniſters of the Goſpel are like *Noah's* Dove, which brought him an Olive branch, a Token of Peace: Miniſters are Ambaſſadours for Chriſt. It is a term borrowed by the Apoſtle from Princes Courts, and applyed to Miniſters by a decent Analogie; Miniſters being as Ambaſſadours, who are Meſſengers from Princes Courts to offer Peace.

The Scriptures (which are the Subject, and the Subſtance of Miniſters Preaching) are the Word of God, who is a God of all Conſolation; and being fitly applyed are likely to revive and refreſh fainting and fearful Spirits. Here you will finde promiſes of comfort, and examples of thoſe who have found comfort. Here you will find God merciful and gracious, forgiving Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion, and

Sin. Here you will find that Gods Mercies hold proportion with his Power; and that they are not to be limited by the bounds of your weak understandings: And know, that as it is Blasphemy to limit Gods Power, so it is Blasphemy to limit his Goodness.

The Scriptures will tell you, that God is a Father of Mercies, a God that revives the Spirits of the humble, and the Heart of the contrite ones; that he is nigh to them who are of a broken Heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite Spirit. And therefore hearken dilligently to the Ministry of the Gospel, as being a Word of Peace, and a Word of Comfort. And know this, That it is your duty to receive comfort, (when it is offered upon good grounds) as to do a duty commanded. It is a great Sin to reject or despair of Mercy: it is thought by some to be a greater Sin in *Judas* to despair of Mercy, than it was to betray the Person of Christ into the hands of them who crucified him. Oh, therefore let not your stubborn Souls refuse comfort! But when Gods Mercy appears to you in his Word Preached, yield to the credit of it, and be over power'd with the Authority of it; let your Consciences be satisfied with those evidences that God hath made known in his Word, and passed upon your Souls for your everlasting comfort.

Fifthly, Give your selves unto Prayer. *Oratio, sanat*

ſanat peſtes mentis: Prayer is a means to cure the Malladies of Diſeaſed Souls: Prayer is the Compaſs by which we ſail. When all is clouded, no Star of comfort ſhining upon us, this will hold us in the right Courſe, till we again diſcover Mercy. *Out of the depth have I called unto thee, and thou heardſt me,* Pſal. 130. 1. Prayer is a means to obtain the pardon of Sin, *James* 5. 14. And upon the pardon of Sin follows peace and comfort, *Be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee,* Mat. 9. 2. Let the conſideration of Gods All-ſufficiency, his Faithfulneſs, his Grace and Mercy, his Readineſs to Pardon and Comfort; his rich Promiſes move you to pray in Faith, in Humility, and with Fervency, that he would quiet your Spirits and ſtabliſh your Hearts. And in your Prayer to the Lord Chriſt, plead his humanity, that He Himſelf did once live in your Nature on Earth, as in a Veil of Tears, and Miſery, and in the ſhadow of Death; that He Himſelf was once cloathed on Earth with the Infirmities of mans common Nature; that He Himſelf knows what it is to be tempted by Satan, by Men, both Friends and Enemies; that He knows what it is to be in an Agony, to lie under a Spiritual Deſertion, to have a Soul exceeding ſorrowful and heavy (even) unto Death. Entreat Him (as being a Merciful High Prieſt, and as being touched with the feeling of your Infirmities) to have compaſſion upon you, to relieve

lieve and ſuccour you: remember Him who cry'd out, *Thou Son of David have mercy on me.*

Sixthly, Labour after Righteouſneſs in your dealings with men; that is a way to obtain peace: *Say unto the righteous it ſhall go well with him.* A due Adminiſtration of Juſtice by Magiſtrates, and Righteous dealing between man and man, is a means to uphold *Legem, Regem,* and *Gregem*: The Law, the King, and Country. And it is a means to procure peace to your ſelves: *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.*

Seventhly, Set about the exerciſe of Charity. It was *David's* enquiry, 2 *Sam.* 9. 1. *Is there any of the houſe of Saul left, to whom I may ſhew kindneſs for Jonathan's ſake?* And let it be your enquiry, Are there no poor members of Chriſt, to whom we may ſhew kindneſs for Chriſt's ſake? True Religion lieth much in this. And therefore be not weary of well doing: *Do good to all men, but eſpecially to the houſhold of faith.* This is a means to bring peace to you at the laſt: *The merciful ſhall enter into peace, and ſhall reſt in their beds,* Iſai 57. 1. If in your Charity towards the poor members of Chriſt, you have reſpect to the glory of God, and the honour of Chriſt, and ſhall reſt upon his Approbation and Remuneration; you ſhall find (at laſt) that Chriſt will own it, as being done to himſelf; and will ſo accept

cept and reward it, *Mat.* 25. But chiefly we must make sure of Christ when we have done all, or else we may miss of peace and comfort: We must have comfortable apprehensions of the fulness of Christ's Merits, or else we can have no peace with God, nor within our selves.

It was *Luther's* Observation: Saith he, *I have seen among the Papists, who have painfully travelled, and upon meer Conscience have done much in Praying and Fasting, and other Exercises for this End, that they might get peace of Conscience; and when they had done all, they were smitten down with fear, especially when death approached: They were then,* saith he, *so fearful, that I have seen many Murderers, and other Malefactors condemn'd to death, die more courageously, and more comfortably than they.* This was *Luther's* Observation in his time, and there is reason for it; for although good works are evidences of Faith, and signs of a sanctified Life; yet they can give no assurance of Gods favour by their own merit or worthiness. It is impossible that the Conscience should be pacified (as to God and itself) by any good things found in man: No, not by Faith itself, (for the goodness or merit of it, as being done by us) but as being a grace given us to apprehend the fulness of merit onely in Christ. And therefore when you have done all, make sure of Christ by Faith.

In the Creation we find God above us; In the Law

Law we find God againſt us: But in Chriſt we find God *Emmanuel*, God with us: *O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock*, Cant. 2. 14. This was the Speech of Chriſt to the Church, by the mouth of *Solomon*. The Church was a Dove in the clefts of the Rock: This Rock was Chriſt, the Rock of Ages, and thoſe *foramina Petræ*, were *vulnera Chriſti*: Theſe clefts of the Rock, are the wounds of Chriſt. The Church in the wounds of Chriſt, is as a Dove in the clefts of the Rock, quiet and ſafe from danger. The Lord Chriſt was ſent to bind up the broken hearted; and to proclaime liberty to the captives; and the opening of the Priſon doors to them who were bound; to give them beauty for aſhes; the oil of joy for mourning; and the garment of praiſe for the ſpirit of heavineſs, *Iſai.* 61. 1, 3. *He is that good ſheperd that gathers his lambs, and carries them in his boſome*, Iſai. 40. 11. The Lord Chriſt is that Sun of Righteouſneſs, that ariſeth with healing in his Wings: He is that Tree in the Revalation, the Leaves whereof, were for the healing of the Nations: He is the great Phyſician of Souls: He cures us of the guilt of Sin by Juſtification, of the pollution of Sin, by Sanctification; of the trouble of Conſcience, by Conſolation: He is full of precious Ointment, his Name (Chriſt) ſignifies ſo much: He hath Oil and Wine to pour into your wounds, *Luke* 10. 34. He hath the Oil of Gladneſs,

and

and the Oil of Love; But his Soveraign Medicines are his own Fleſh and Blood; *By his ſtripes we are healed*, Iſai. 53. *He hath ſlain the enmity, and hath reconciled us by the Croſs*, Epheſ. 2. 16. *We are reconciled to God by the death of his Son*, Rom. 5. 9, 10. *The blood of Chriſt ſpeaks better things than the blood of Abel*, Heb. 12. 24. *The blood of Abel cryeth for vengeance*, Gen. 4. 10. Mat. 23. 35. But the Lord Chriſt cryeth with a loud voice, (as with the voice of a mighty Angel) my Blood for the undeſerving; my Blood for the ill-deſerving; my Blood for ſinners, for the worſt of ſinners, for the chiefeſt of ſinners; my Blood for all blood; my Blood for the Sins of the World; nay, and for a World of Sins. Well might the Apoſtle call this Blood precious Blood, 1 *Pet.* 1. 19. It is precious Blood in itſelf, as being the Blood of the Son of God; it is precious in its Effects. Whereas other blood calls for Revenge, this Blood calls for Grace, for Mercy, for Pardon, for Reconciliation, for Acceptation, and Salvation: *We are juſtified by his blood*, Rom. 5. 9. and upon this follows our peace with God, *Rom.* 5. 1. *We are waſhed alſo, and made white by this blood*, Revel. 7. 14. Now the ſence and experience of the purity of heart, and a reformed life, layeth before us a ground of peace and comfort: Being waſhed and ſanctified by this Blood, we have a good, a pure, and a clear Conſcience; in the teſti-

mony whereof we may rejoyce and take comfort, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12.

We read of *Themistocles*, that when he went to to make Peace with a Prince, he carried the Princes Son in his Arms. And if you will make Peace with God (who is the King of Kings) you must carry Christ a long with you, who is the Son of God, and the Prince of Peace. If you can with old *Simeon* get Christ in your arms, you may sing a *Requiem* as he did. When you are thus at Peace with God, and within your selves; I would advise you to two things.

First, *To be thankful.*

Secondly, *To beware of Apostasie.*

1. Be thankful: It is fit you should be so; *Beneficium* and *Officium* must go together: every one that is *servatus*, should be *servus*: Praise is comely for the Upright. The fire was kept burning continually upon the Altar, to shew us our constant Duty in this respect. God requires thankfulness for the least Mercy: *Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost*, said Christ, *John* 6. 12. We must be thankful for the least Blessing; much more should we be thankful for so great a Mercy as this. Hath the Lord Christ spoken comfortablely to you in a Wilderness? Hath the Lord Christ been to you as the Shadow of a Rock to a Traveller in a weary Land? Are you brought out of a Dungeon into a Pallace, out

out of Darkneſs into Light, out of the Shadow of Death into the Land of the Living? O then, ſet up *David's* Reſolution! Pſal. 30. 11, 12. *Thou haſt turned for me, my mourning into dancing; thou haſt put off my ſack-cloath, and girded me with gladneſs, to the end that my glory may ſing praiſe to thee, and not be ſilent: O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.* And elſewere ſaith he, *I will be glad, and rejoyce in thy mercy, for thou haſt conſidered my trouble; thou haſt known my ſoul in adverſity. Oh, how great is thy goodneſs! How amiable are thy tabernacles! How great are thy works! I will triumph in the work of thy hands*, Pſal. 90. 4.

Are you now delivered from the trouble and miſery of a Wounded Conſcience? Is that confuſion formerly in your Souls now rectified? Are you now under the aſſurances of Faith? Is God in your Hearts? Is Heaven in your Eyes? Is joy in your countenances? O then, let the comfort thereof enlarge your Soul, like an Angel, let it put wings upon your Soul, like a *Cherub*; and let it ſet your Soul on fire, like a *Seraphim*, with holy zeal of Gods glory, and the good of others. With holy *David* be telling others, what God hath done for your Soul: ſpread forth the ſweet odours of praiſe; be daily offering up the Sacrifice of Thankſgiving.

II. Beware of Apoſtaſie and back-Sliding. *Pſal.* 85. 8. *The Lord will ſpeak peace to his people, and to*

his ſaints; but let them not return again to folly: After you have received Chriſt into your Hearts, (to revive and refreſh you) let not then your carriage toward Chriſt be like the carriage of the *Jews* toward Chriſt, after they had received him into *Jeruſalem*, Mat. 21. At his entrance they received him as their King, *v.* 5. They *ſpread their garments in the way, they cut down branches and ſtrewed them in the way: And the multitude that went before, and that followed* after, *cried, Hoſanna to the Son of David; Hoſanna in the higheſt.* But the Scene was quickly changed; they received him as their King; afterward they would have no other King but *Cæſar.* Here they cried, *Hoſanna, Hoſanna*; afterward away with him, away with him, crucifie him, crucifie him; as if they would have had him twice crucified: Here they ſpread garments in his way; afterward they caſt lots for his garment: Here they cut down branches to ſpread before him; and afterward they prepared a Croſs, and a Crown of Thorns for him. O let not your carriage be ſuch toward Chriſt, after a reception of Peace and Comfort from him! When you are got into Wiſdoms ways, (which are ways of pleaſantneſs) take heed that you do not (then) ſtart a ſide lake a broken Bow. Say then concerning Chriſt, as *Jacob* did concerning the Angel, *I will not let thee go.* Let Chriſt be written in your Hearts with Golden Letters

ters, as it was ſaid of *Ignatius*. Let Chriſt be written in your Hearts with indelible Letters, that neither temptations nor tortures may blot it out. Keep cloſe to Chriſt in all humility and reverence, in all duties, and by all means keep up communion with him; be no longer as a barren Wilderneſs to him, leſt he be again as a Land of Darkneſs to you. Grieve not the Spirit of Chriſt, which is the Cauſe of all Grace and Comfort: Reſiſt not the gracious motions of the Spirit of Chriſt, by carnal delights, or by ſinful practiſes: Let his Spirit have a full work: Let it be ſeen that the Spirit of Chriſt reigns in you, in that you will do nothing contrary to it. *Spiritus Chriſti ita nos tractat, ſicut à nobis tractatur:* The Spirit of Chriſt will handle you as you handle it. If you again grieve the Spirit of Chriſt, (by reſiſting the Holy motions of it) He may again vex your Spirits, in with-holding the comfortable influences of it. And therefore have an high eſteem of Chriſt, delight in him, and pleaſe him, by your obedience in the courſe of your life. By this means you may be like Saint *Anthony* the Monk, of whom it is ſaid, that he always appeared of a cheerful countenance. By this means you may be at peace with the creatures, at agreement with the ſtone of the wall, and beaſts of the Fields; ſo that you may ſafely walk by the *Lion*, and tread upon the *Baſilisk:* Hereby you may find inward Peace in your Hearts and Con-

Conſciences; and may be eſtabliſhed in your combate againſt the terrours of Sin, and the temptations of Satan; and may be poſſeſſed with ſuch quietneſs of mind, as may make you in a time of mourning and ſuffering for Righteouſneſs, to rejoyce, not onely in the promiſe, but in the poſſeſſion of ſuch a Peace internal, as may end in a Peace eternal in the Heavens: which is no leſs than the Felicity of the Saints in Heaven, and the Glory of the bleſſed Angels, who having no jarring principles among them, remain for ever in Love and Peace.

FINIS.

Dorcas Werge
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